2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

682 and kills the man who shot and killed from there with one arrow, well and good; otherwise he is set free. And if a man is killed by an arrow passing through an animal, then, in the same way, they let some animal stand, and let the man who shot and killed stand behind the animal, so far away from the animal as the killed one was. If shooting through the animal placed there he kills him, well and good; otherwise he is free.

178 684 A man who has been robbed of his wife may, without any judgement, kill both on the spot, anywhere he may track and find the two, like a deer in the forest. His relatives will help him tracking them, but he himself will do the killing. Nowadays they do not kill them; but the seducer will have to pay five rupees to save his head.

Those who raped women they also treated in the same way. Also these have nowadays to pay five rupees to save their head, and besides this they fine them as heavily as they can. Mostly they make them pay a score of rupees. They cut off the right hand of a man who forcibly had applied cinder to a woman, and with a spindle they poked out one of his eyes. And there was a seperate fine. Nowadays these also have to pay five rupees to save hand and eye; they get a beating and also have to pay a fine. We had no murder without a cause.

178 683 As to witches, formerly we drove them away after having treated them disgracefully; only now and then have we killed them. Also nowadays they drive them away, and sometimes they also kill them.

But this is not right, because the ancestors of old did not act in this way. If they were accidentially killed when they were beating them in anger, the ancestors of old did not call this murder; therefore they did not punish those who beat them to death.

178 684 Our punishment for illicit intercourse between relatives and with a person of another race was outcasting, and so it is now also. Nowadays this is also slackening off with us; some persons quite confidently act in this way; the people do not do them anything.

177 178 685 Formerly the Santals did not steal; but nowadays they have learnt this also from the Dekos. From former times only one kind of theft is remembered, viz., to steal and eat sheep or goats. When such animals had gone astray anywhere, then the whole village population would kill and eat them when they found them, and the village headman they would give a double share. If this was proved, they would then restore the head (give a fresh animal instead), and would fine them five four-anna bits each. Nowadays they take all to the smooth verandah (i. e., the courts).

178 682 Abortus provocatus we have had from old times. They were doing this when birth would be improper (on social indications). If it is proved, we fine both the medicine giver and the treated one ten rupees each. Nowadays we take such crimes to the courts. If they defame anybody without cause, they will have to pay five rupees to wipe off the defamation and five four-anna bits to the village council. The crime of sodomy is the act of drunk men only. Formerly we gave such men an awful thrashing and fined them ten

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4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

(English Translation)

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"For ten months I kept thee in my womb,
For twelve I had thee on my waist,
How can I keep thee now ? Oh, my daughter,
The house is up to the door full of people.

(*Chorus*)

For ten months I kept thee in my womb,
For twelve I had thee on my waist,
How can I keep thee now ? Oh, my daughter,
How can thou part with mother's affection.

Oh mother, for pity's sake do not leave me.
How can I leave thee ?
Get up my daughter and begone.
On the Tilayaka place stands the rich man's horse saddled and bridled,
Oh my darling mother, how can I leave thee ?
My father has received a handful of rupees and a long horned bull
Mymother has got a striped dress
The handful of rupees is spent, the striped dress of my mother is worn out
The tall-horned bull died in the bathing place
My head is marked repeatedly with the red paint
I am signed for ever and ever"

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I now cite an incident in which it can be seen how the father is attached to his sons and daughters—for the son's sake the father murdered his own mother and mother's sister.

It was alleged that Malta lost a son and a daughter who died of fever some time before the murder. Suspecting that his mother was a witch and

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

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was killing his children with her baleful influence, he convened a panchayat of the village elders and accused his mother of witchcraft. A quarrel in the family followed, when his mother left his protection and went to her sister's residence in the same village. A few days later Malta went to the residence of his maternal aunt for the treatment of his sick child by her husband Juno, who was a doctor amongst the Santals and stayed there for a few days. On the night of occurrence Malta who had fever slept in the same room with his mother, his aunt, his son and the other inmates. But at about midnight Juno, the village doctor was roused from his sleep by certain sounds and he noticed that Malta was standing with a pickaxe in his hand near the bed where his mother and aunt slept. The two women were lying senseless on the bed with bleeding wounds on their heads.[1]

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The relation between the elder brother and the younger brother amongst the Santals is very interesting. The elder brother, specially the eldest one, is looked upon as the representative of the father and after his death is the head and governor of the family. For this reason there are in fact some Santals who look upon the wife of the eldest brother as equal to their mother and pay her respect accordingly. Again the elder brother cannot call by name the wife of his younger brother. (This was verified whenever I asked for the genealogical table of the Santals. I noticed that in every case the elder cannot take the name of his younger brother's wife; he asked others to tell her name). The Bakat bahu

1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 18th May, 1933.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

754 very late he met with a crowd of witches standing under
539 a hollow Mowah tree.

He managed to struggle free and run away. Two days after this those witches caused him to fall from a tree and break his arm. *Ojhas* failed to cure him The arm stiffened and maggots formed and in a few days Jebra became speechless and died.

• 683 How strong the belief of witchery amongst the Santals is even today can be easily judged from the following case of actual witch-murder reminding us of England and Europe, a few centuries ago.

A Santal of the name of Mangal Soren of the village of Bijapur, in the district of Santal Parganas, murdered a Santali woman of the name of Gaura Murmu believing her to be a witch who had caused the death of Rajam
[692] a Santali, through her witchcraft. The case was heard at the Patna High Court by Justices Kulwant Sahay and Sir T. S. Macpherson on 5th January, 1933 He (Mangal Soren) was convicted and sentenced to death.[1]

756 **Spirit Doctor—the Santal Ojha**

A type of Shamanism is present in full swing amongst the Santals though the authority of the headman is always respected. The Shamans among the Santals have degenerated into mere physicians with higher types of knowledge which in its theory entails communication and, partly, control of the supernatural world. Thus when the herbal doctor fails, men with knowledge of divination and favoured

1. Reported in a Calcutta daily, paper Amrita Bazar Patrika 7th Jan. 1933.

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

tell him 'Now let us hear the oracle'. The *Jan* then takes his fee which is a rupee and tells them the name of a *bonga* or a witch who is at the bottom of their troubles.

Then they return to their village. If the *Jan* says that a *bonga* is giving the trouble then the patient will promise sacrifice. If the *Jan* declares any woman to be a witch, this woman is harassed in every possible way, fined and driven out of the village, and at times killed.

At present the *Jans* are, according to Santal belief, not like the old righteous ones. The *Jans* of ancient time got their knowledge through dreams at night or through visions in the daytime, not possessed by a divination spirit like *Jans* of the present day. Now-a-days the *Jans* keep informers who find out and tell them all particulars. *Jans* of to-day are very careful in fixing the blame. They generally fix the blame on some *bonga* or other in preference to a witch.

Classification of the supreme, superior and supernatural beings: It is very difficult to attempt a classification of the orders of the supernatural beings which constitute the religious belief of a community. The classification would often imply the existence of a notion of hierarchy of the supernatural beings, one being far superior to the rest. It is curious to observe that this supreme being is never worshipped in the faith that he can never work out any evil. As for the rest the rank may be determined in the order in which worship is offered to them. But here again the difficulty would lie in the fact that a particular occasion would demand predominance being given to particular spirits. Thus the classification would be more or less a division in parallel lines, for it

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

754 lot of nonsense. The people of the house consulted the oil oracle
754 and found that a *boŋga* had possessed him. They did their best
755 to exorcize the spirit, but the boy only became worse and began to wander about in the open. After a few days he left his home and did not return. Again they consulted the oil oracle and saw that he had been pounced on by a *ḍan boŋga*; by trying to
754 exorcize it they had only made him worse. From time to time the herd boys used to see the youth, but when they went to catch him he ran into the jungle. When he saw that the folk were trying to get hold of him he went over to Gurma hill, about seven miles from Calta, and lived there; he used to be seen there occasionally. His parents went there to try to bring him home; they stayed in the neighbouring village for three or four days, but they were unable to do anything. A few days later it came to be known that he was regularly visiting the house of a female *jan*. He went there at night to drink water from a brass pot that she placed for him. The boy's father heard about it and watched the place one night. Sure enough, the boy came and drank the water out of the pot, but when he saw his father he ran away. There has been no news of him from that time to this; no one knows where he has gone or where he stays or what he eats. His father says that he had become very thin and had long hair and long nails. They have not found him yet." The fear of witchcraft is a fact of everyday experience among the Santals; the possibility that evil forces can disrupt and disturb their lives, robbing them of the fruit of their labours and mocking at their prayers, is never far from the surface of their minds.

754 Although they fear greatly the influence of the *ḍan*, they
683 take vigorous action to rid their village of her presence once they have been convinced that a particular person is a witch. Very often they take some steps without going to the extreme of consulting the witchfinder. They act on the suspicions revealed by the oil oracle and confirmed by eccentric behaviour on the part of some individual who lives in the house that has been indicated. The nature of the action depends on the extent of the injury that has been inflicted, and is left at times to the initiative of the principal victims. It is extremely difficult to obtain authentic evidence of particular cases, but I can personally vouch for examples where women have been severely beaten, other cases where the whole house has been fined for "keeping" a witch, and some where all the members of a family have been driven from the village or have themselves preferred

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

to leave. On one occasion I was informed that a woman had been killed as a suspected witch, but it was impossible to make a satisfactory investigation; and on another occasion I was asked to see the body of a young man where the villagers were convinced that witchcraft had been responsible for his death. It appeared to be a case of poisoning. Fortunately, some of the evidence relating to witchcraft and murder has been documented. Murder by Santals is comparatively rare, but fear of witchcraft is one of the most frequent motives at work. Statistics have been published for the Santal Parganas for the period 1931–40. During this period there were seventy-eight cases of homicide by Santals before the courts, and of the seventy-eight it was definitely established that sixteen were due to accusations of witchcraft.[1] It is reasonable to infer that the actual number was somewhat larger, for in most such cases the sympathy of the community is on the side of the murderers, and so it becomes a fairly easy matter to conceal the crime.

It appears that in other parts of North India the magician, or *ojha*, is a dealer in "black magic",[2] but among the Santals the order of *ojhas* might almost seem to have been called into being because of the need to defend society against the evil influence and the sorcery of witches who are the enemies of society. The *ojha* is a benefactor of society and seeks to overcome witchcraft by invading the territory of the witches and using their weapons. Each of the opposing camps is prepared to lay hands on any weapon that may serve its purpose.

The same truth is evident in all the Santal's dealings with things that he cannot understand. The attitudes summed up in the terms "magic" and "religion" are both in evidence. It is not usual in these days to distinguish sharply between them.[3] Magic is used by the Santal as a tool to accomplish many and varied ends. It is not absent from his dealings with the spirits, and it can be used for social as well as antisocial ends. It does

[1] S. M. Naqavi, "Santal Murders", an article in *Man in India*, September 1943, Vol. XXIII.

[2] W. Crooke, *op. cit.*, p. 443: "In Northern India the worker of black magic is the Ojha, a term derived from the Sanskrit Upādhāya, 'teacher', and the Syāna, 'cunning man', who follow the traditional methods handed down from their predecessors. Their stock-in-trade is a collection of Mantras or spells, many based on the magic of the Tāntras, 'rule, ritual', used in the cult of the Sakti or female energy, by which they are supposed to acquire the power of controlling spirits or demons, and of forcing them to obey the orders of the sorcerer."

[3] Cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, Cambridge University Press, 1945, p. 71: "Magic for us, though it may not postulate any transcendent reality, is an integral part of primitive religion."